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Date 19/12/2025
Your Ref
Our Ref 10881

Enquiries to Richard Mutch
Extension 35687
Direct Line 0131 465 5687
loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot
richard.mutch@nhs.scot

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – MENTAL HEALTH REFERRALS

I write in response to your request for information in relation to dermatology and mental health referrals.

Question:

1. The number of patients referred for mental health or psychological support where a dermatology or skin condition was recorded in any part of the referral record including diagnosis fields, contributing factors, referral notes or coding flags. If exact figures cannot be extracted, please provide any available count or estimate.
2. If held, please provide any available breakdown of these referrals by age or age band. For example children, young people, adults or older adults, or alternative groupings used in your reporting systems.
3. The number of psychodermatology referrals recorded in each year, if your Health Board records this term or pathway. If psychodermatology is not coded separately or not offered, please confirm this and provide any available information on cases where dermatological conditions were linked to mental health support.

Answer:

I am advised that this information is not held in a centrally extractable format. Under the Freedom of Information Act NHS Lothian is not required to create new records to enable it to respond to your enquiry. This information is not collated or held in aggregate form and it would be necessary to review all case files relating to patients over the period you have requested to assemble the information you seek. Even if NHS Lothian did this – and there would be significant cost implications in doing so – it would be unable to respond in full to your request. The information requested is therefore exempt under section 12.1 – Cost. Please note that estimates are not covered under FOI(S)A only factually accurate recorded information.

Question:

4. The total number of dermatology referrals recorded in each year, or any equivalent activity data such as dermatology outpatient attendances.

Answer:

| Year of Referral | OP Referrals |
|------------------|--------------|
| 2022 | 24,935 |
| 2023 | 27,400 |
| 2024 | 27,642 |
| 2025* | 25,929 |

These figures;

Include all new outpatients who had a referral to Dermatology between 1st Jan 2022 and 16th Dec 2025

I hope the information provided helps with your request.

If you are unhappy with our response to your request, you do have the right to request us to review it. Your request should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this letter, and we will reply within 20 working days of receipt. If our decision is unchanged following a review and you remain dissatisfied with this, you then have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner within 6 months of receipt of our review response. You can do this by using the Scottish Information Commissioner's Office online appeals service at www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal. If you remain dissatisfied with the Commissioner's response you then have the option to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law.

If you require a review of our decision to be carried out, please write to the FOI Reviewer at the email address at the head of this letter. The review will be undertaken by a Reviewer who was not involved in the original decision-making process.

FOI responses (subject to redaction of personal information) may appear on NHS Lothian's Freedom of Information website at: <https://org.nhslothian.scot/FOI/Pages/default.aspx>

Yours sincerely

ALISON MACDONALD
Executive Director, Nursing
Cc: Chief Executive